

# EXHIBIT 3

# Uber Cab Confessions

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For the first time this week, I'm angry. Like, Hulk angry. Maybe it's all that burnt drive-through coffee I've been drinking. Or the lack of sleep. But my patience is wearing thin—as thin as the fabric barely concealing this girl's crotch. It's after midnight when four drunk millennials climb into my car. Two guys. Two girls. Four pairs of short shorts. The door slams shut, and a voice from behind me shouts: 4100.

I'm sorry, I say, fumbling with the GPS. Is that an address? Or a business? One of the guys sighs audibly—it's a bar here in Los Angeles, apparently; Silver Lake, to be precise—and then he barks: Turn around and take a left on Sunset. That's all you have to do.

Just for the record, I have been waiting in this brat's driveway for fifteen minutes while he (I'm just guessing here) stared at himself in the mirror and (again, just guessing here) debated exactly how many rope bracelets still qualifies as *casual*. I won't notice the pimp cup he and his friends are sipping from until they get out of the car, which is probably a good thing—I'm a bit of a neat freak, and I've never enjoyed so much as a Nutri-Grain bar inside my car.

Ever seen the *SNL* bit The Girl You Wish You Hadn't Started a Conversation with at a Party? It's a sketch about these two girls. As I merge into traffic, I begin to understand how my parents must have felt all those years ago chauffeuring around me and my idiot friends. At least I'm getting paid for the privilege.

Trial Exhibit No.

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**Travis Kalanick**

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I should explain. For the past week, I've turned my 2013 Prius (fuck yeah) into a taxicab, driving nights for uberX, the low-cost arm of the ride-on-demand company Uber, which, if you live in a major American city, either has already transformed how you get around town or will within the next few years.

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My Uber Rating Makes Me Feel Like a Bad Person

By Jake Woolf



Here's how it works: Download the app and enter your credit card information. When you need a ride—in anything from a town car to a Prius—open the app and press a button. That's it. Drivers in Uber's network are circling your neighborhood, and by the magic of GPS,

the closest one is arriving at your door, oh, right about...now. The fare is calculated by some algorithm of distance and time. No cash is ever exchanged. Since Uber's very first ride in May 2010, it has attracted a crazily eclectic clientele, ranging from Wall Street expense-account jockeys to comedian Louis C.K., who recently told a story on Jerry Seinfeld's web series about using Uber to facilitate a stoned adventure to a 3-D IMAX theater. Late last year, a snapshot of what appeared to be Uber's financials was leaked to the website Valleywag, and though Uber declined to confirm the numbers, they told the story of a company in mid-boom. Over one month last fall, Uber averaged 1.1 million requested rides per week, with upwards of 430,000 active weekly clients. Based on those figures, Valleywag estimated Uber could be raking in \$213 million in annual revenue. The company's reported valuation: \$3.7 billion dollars.

Anecdotally, though, there seemed to be something vaguely, well, douchey about the way people talked about Uber. Last summer, the company experimented with helicopter rides on demand to the Hamptons; it was a stunt, but one that seemed to speak volumes about its ambitions. I wondered if Uber was aiming to become the ride-on-demand equivalent of bottle service in Vegas: It's for people who want to feel like Jay Z for a night.

At the same time, uberX is oddly egalitarian: It offers rides for the people, *by* the people. What's more democratic—and capitalistic—than giving a lift to a stranger for a small fee? Though I did wonder what kind of fool would climb into a stranger's car. Even more worrisome question: What naive idiot would invite a stranger into his car? I was basically picking up hitchhikers and trying to convince myself: Murderers don't use iPhones.

Worst-case scenario—besides my own death, of course—I figured I'd see some hi-def *Taxicab Confessions* shit play out in my rearview mirror. And it did. I'll get to that. But first I have to drop off Rope Bracelets and his drunk ladies at da club. Listen in as he moderates a C-SPAN-worthy debate on the definition of *getting wild*.

**GIRL #1:** She wants to *get wild*.

**GIRL #2:** I mean, I'm *already* wild.

**ROPE BRACELETS:** You want to take it in the ass.

**GIRL #1:** Listen, I'm not even going to comment on that. She wanted to *get wild*, and it had nothing to do with a dick in the ass.

**GIRL #2:** That's what *getting wild* is these days. It's getting it in the ass.

Suddenly, Girl #1 seems to remember that there's a stranger (me) in the car. Are you enjoying this conversation right now? she asks. *Yeah, kinda*, I think to myself. By the way, our friend wanted us to squeeze six people in this car. We were like, *That's not going to happen*.

**GIRL #1:** Safety first.

**GIRL #2:** Fucking safety first.

The clearest sign of Uber's ascendance is that its name is no longer just a noun. It's become a verb, too, as in: How did you get home from that party? *I Uber'd*. There are competitors in the field—such as Lyft and Sidecar—but when was the last time someone said they Sidecar'd home at midnight?

Uber capitalizes on what economists refer to as slack resources or underutilized capacity. Translation: Why let your car sit idle in the driveway when you can turn it into a cash machine? The future is all about monetizing downtime. The thing that's really striking to me is that a lot of people who use Uber—it's not like they used to take taxis, says Arun Sundararajan, a professor at NYU's Stern School of Business who specializes in the digital economy. It's almost like you're inventing a new way of organizing your day because you can get a car in three minutes. You can define a new lifestyle for yourself.

Every generation gets the app it deserves. Uber was co-founded by Travis Kalanick, a bro-y alpha nerd who's been coding since he was in sixth grade and whose first brush with success came in the late '90s while he was still an undergrad at UCLA. (That venture, called Scour, an early experiment in Napster-type file sharing—translation: file stealing—imploded in the face of a \$250 billion copyright-infringement lawsuit.) Not to make assumptions, but Kalanick probably wasn't the first kid in his class to lose his virginity. But the way he talks now—which is large—he's surely making up for lost time. When I tease him about his skyrocketing desirability, he deflects with a wisecrack about women on demand: Yeah, we call that Boob-er.

My cabbie-for-a-week experiment wasn't pre-sanctioned by Uber. I signed up online like every other prospective driver, a relatively painless process involving a background check and an online tutorial. (Hint: Offering bottled water to customers is a good way to improve your customer reviews.) Uber won't accept older, crappier wheels, or rust, so I had to upload photos of my car and proof of insurance to the company's website; a week later, I picked up my Uber phone—an iPhone loaded with Uber's driver app—at a hotel near LAX, and by the time I walked out, I was making money. Uber will not divulge how many drivers are working the Uber grid, but the day I picked up my phone I saw a good 300 people doing the same thing. (Not to stereotype, but mostly they looked like guys who drive cabs.) From there, Uber operates more like a pimp than a boss: Depending on the city, Uber gets approximately 20 percent; the driver pockets the rest.

Easy, right? You pick people up, drive them where they tell you, drop them off. Well, there was definitely a learning curve. That first night, I pulled up to a house in Beverly Hills and watched a teenage girl with a backpack hug her mom good-bye on the porch, then climb into the backseat of my car. (I did my best Sherlock Holmes trying to work out the story here.



*Where would a teenage girl go alone at 9 P.M. on a weeknight?* To Dad's house. Shared custody, my dear Watson. BOOM.) I don't think I've talked to a teenage girl since I was a teenager, and it hasn't gotten any easier. She gave me an address in the Palisades and looked down at her iPhone for the next twenty minutes. I tried to think of a conversation starter, but really, anything a 35-year-old man says to a girl with a backpack sounds pervy. How was school today? Is it cold back there? Is anyone waiting at home? So rather than make potentially litigious small talk, I just turned up the radio. (Uber bill: \$26.)

There were rookie mistakes, too. Like the time a financial analyst/bro-fessional got into my car and proceeded to make a work call. I tried to shut off the automated voice on my GPS—*Turn left in 500 feet!*—but accidentally pressed play on a Tegan and Sara song instead. Or the time this massive dude riding solo sat next to me in the front seat (weird) and reached for his wallet at the end of the ride. I'm sorry, I said, we're not allowed to accept tips. He looked at me, confused: I was getting my phone. Oh. (\$8.)

On day one, I returned home after 2 A.M. and logged on to Uber's site to see how much total money I'd made after the company took its cut. (A slow Tuesday night: four fares, \$64.) That's when I noticed my approval ratings. Passengers rate drivers anonymously on a scale from 1 to 5; I needed to maintain a 4.7 rating to stay employed. Staring at my report card, I thought: Which of these motherfuckers gave me a 4?

Doing this job, I learned quickly that there's an unspoken contract between driver and passenger, and it has two primary clauses. First: I promise to get you safely and comfortably from Point A to Point B. Second, and just as important: I vow to look the other way while you, say, make out in the backseat (that happened) or refer a friend to your coke dealer (that, too). It's an understanding, arrived at with no words: We'll never see each other again, therefore you may act like an animal. The job can also be pretty lonely. Late one night, I stopped at a 7-Eleven for a cup of coffee, and I found myself all too happy to chat with a traffic cop who looked like Retta from *Parks and Rec* and who warned me not to put French-vanilla creamer in my coffee. There's something wrong with milk that doesn't need to be refrigerated, she said. That fake milk will kill you.

But something happened around the third night: At the risk of sounding hippie-dippy, I started to give myself over to the experience. My Uber phone was equipped with a heat map, which shows drivers where the company's most active customers are currently located. Staring at the heat map is like being connected to the Matrix; you can see where shit is going down. Late on a Tuesday night? Culver City and south. On weekends, Venice. I dropped a guy off in an alleyway one night (speakeasy? gambling ring? organ trafficking?) and thought, *There are mysteries in this city*. The job becomes akin to binge-watching a TV series late at night on Netflix: *Okay, just one more*. This can backfire. One night around 1 A.M., I picked up a passenger in Beverly Hills thinking it'd be a quick fare. I wound up taking him forty-five minutes away to Malibu. (\$77.)

But the thrill—and it is thrilling—is the semi-sanctioned voyeurism. The conversations you’re pulled into. The worlds you’re privy to. The unknown pockets of the city you’re suddenly navigating. I’d be lying if I said there wasn’t something sexual about the whole thing, too. Early one morning, I picked up a guy in West Hollywood and drove him to his hotel. We made eye contact in the rearview more times than could be called accidental, and when I pulled up to the lobby, I thought for a moment that he was going to ask me in. It’s been a long week, he said. It sounded like an invitation. (\$14.)

Sometimes I started conversations. Sometimes they did. There’s something about the anonymity that makes you want to talk to a stranger. We’re in the digital age, but people seem to crave old-fashioned human interaction wherever they can get it. And when you drive a taxicab, man, people tell you some weird shit. Did you know that you can beat a Breathalyzer by putting pennies in your mouth? (Don’t try it. It’s not true.) Or that drug dealers sometimes cut cocaine with Tide? Or that some doctors think Augmentin is the best antibiotic for women who’ve just had a C-section? (Don’t get the idea that Uber is just for illicit thrills. One night I picked up two very sober, very intelligent doctors.)

If there’s one thing these fares all had in common, it was the need to escape: a bad party, Mom’s house, a too crowded post-concert clusterfuck. Uber isn’t worth \$3.7 billion dollars just because they built a better taxi service. They built a magic carpet. If you’re at a party and you hear there’s a better one across town? Uber it. Super-rich folks have enjoyed private drivers for years. UberX just brings that luxury to the masses. At the start of 2013, Kalanick told me, 90 percent of Uber’s business was town cars—the fancier line known as UberBLACK. He expects uberX to eclipse it soon. I’m sure he’s right. It’s too easy. No one feels like a baller getting out of a yellow cab. But disappearing into the night? You’re not lame—you’re Rick Ross.

Uber’s nearly vertical growth hasn’t been seamless. After big victories last fall in D.C., Denver, and Dallas, it’s turned its energies toward a bitter war with taxicab owners and county commissioners in Miami, where Uber is currently illegal. Without getting too far into the weeds, it’s currently against the law for a black car to be dispatched in under an hour. This surely protects limo drivers, who’ve invested in medallions. But it’s also *crazy*. Says Kalanick: I’m spending a lot of time with city officials in Miami when I would much rather be at the Shore Club. Or the SLS. (Those are swanky boutique hotels in South Beach, by the way. I had to Google them.)

There was also a PR misfire in September when a political organizer claimed (via Twitter and a post on Uber’s website) that her Uber driver choked her. Police were at the scene, but no charges were filed. The story might have ended there, except that Kalanick’s callous directive about how to handle the fallout—he blamed the media for suggesting Uber was somehow liable for these incidents that aren’t even real in the first place—was accidentally made public. When asked about it now, he repeats flatly that the incident just didn’t happen

and passes on the chance to walk back his remarks: I don't know if I would do anything differently. But man, I'm really not happy that an internal crisis-management e-mail got sent to the journalist.

Still, Kalanick acknowledges that Uber will have to absorb some hits on customer service—for now at least—in order to deliver on its promise of cars in a hurry. He points out that the rating system is meant to keep subpar drivers off the road. And anyway, he's betting—correctly, so far—that customers are willing to accept the risk. If you can get a Prius for cheaper than a taxi, you just changed 100,000 people's lives in a city. If you can get it *reliably*? Holy shit. Kalanick pauses to sum up the experience, then says unabashedly: That's hashtag winning.

My week as a cabdriver was nearly over, and I realized I was going to miss it. I wasn't going to miss the money—after Uber's cut, I took home \$312 on twenty-four rides. (I could have made much more if I'd stayed out later, but I'm basically narcoleptic.) I was going to miss the voyeurism, but not in the way you'd think. As a driver, you're supposed to be invisible, but you're let in on these poignant little moments. One night I picked up a recent college grad from a bar in Silver Lake; he was dressed in fashion-forward camouflage pants and a bandanna, with an oversize gold watch on his wrist. He sat next to me in the front seat (still weird), gave me an address way across town, then fell asleep for the next twenty-five minutes. He looked like a 10-year-old kid in his mother's station wagon, taking a nap after soccer practice. I drove a little more carefully than usual. (\$25.)

The ride I'll remember most wasn't the loudest or the rudest or even the most illicit. It was the hipster couple I picked up outside an indie-rock show. He had a badass blond beard. She was a cool Asian chick. As we sat in post-concert traffic, I listened to their small talk. They'd been dating only a short while—long enough that she could worry a bit about his ailing shoulder (Does it still hurt when you work out?) but not so long that he assumed she'd spend the night. I don't want to pressure you, he whispered sweetly, his unasked question hanging in the air, unanswered. She looked down, said nothing.

Nervous, he continued to talk—about gardening, about how he'd already put too much money into a rental to maintain the grounds. She looked out the window. I'm so over downtown, she said. I just want a backyard and fruit trees.

They kissed. Kissed again. Then she laughed.

When are you going to trim your beard? she said with a teasing smile. It feels like I'm kissing pubic hair.

Something in her voice had changed, a decision reached, and I knew what was going to happen next. In that moment, her boyfriend wasn't a passenger. He was Everyman. He was the hero of this ride, maybe of this entire article. And I was rooting for him. Sure enough, when we pulled up to his house, she got out of the car and went inside with him. (\$32.)



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